



The E-Gobrecht

The Electronic Newsletter of the LIBERTY SEATED COLLECTORS CLUB

Liberty Seated
Collectors Club

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The Liberty Seated Community loses Jim O'Donnell

Jim O'Donnell, numismatist, long time dealer specializing in Liberty Seated and Bust coinage, collector of condition census dimes, and friend to many died in his New York City apartment of unknown causes. His body was found by relatives during the week of September 15th. During the past few years, Jim suffered from epileptic seizures.

Many who knew Jim will remember his friendly nature, quick wit, good sense of humor, and exceptional knowledge of Liberty Seated coinage. He personally handled many rarities over the years and helped collectors fill holes in their collections.

Jim usually had a table at the major shows and was always glad to greet collectors with an good

story, show and tell of a new rare coin, or an interesting variety. He had a great memory for rarities he handled in the past; he was quickly able to recall dates, prices, and conditions of many of his coins.

Dick Osburn recalls that "I considered Jim my mentor in the coin business. He told me to learn what was truly rare and have it at my table. The collectors would come. It's unbelievable how right on that advice was. I still pinch myself occasionally when I see how well it's worked. He was stubborn as a mule, and sometimes hard to get along with, but under the gruff exterior was a huge heart."

He will be missed; please remember him in your thoughts and prayers.

The Editor



Jim O'Donnell, fourth from left, is shown here with his friends and numismatic colleagues at the July 2008 Baltimore regional meeting of the Liberty Seated Collectors Club. This photograph may be one of the last, if not the last, taken of him.

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The E-Gobrecht is a twice award winning electronic publication of the Liberty Seated Collectors Club (LSCC). The LSCC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the attributions of the Liberty Seated Coin series. The LSCC provides the information contained in this email newsletter from various sources free of charge as a general service to the membership and others with this numismatic interest. You do not have to be a LSCC member to benefit from this newsletter; subscription to the E-Gobrecht is available to anyone. All disclaimers are in effect as the completeness and/or accuracy of the information contained herein cannot be completely verified. Contact information is included at the end.



Auction News

by
Jim Gray

September was very busy with five major auctions being conducted.

The **Goldberg** Pre-Long Beach sale did not have any coins of interest.

The **Bowers & Merena** Rarities sale contained a splendid 1873-CC dime in AU-55 that was well struck and nicely toned for \$40,250. An 1873-CC no arrows half in MS-63 and an attractive coin did not sell. An 1851 original Dollar in MS-61 but glossy from an old cleaning did not sell. An 1852 original Dollar in AU-58 but definitely low end with obvious wear on all the high points and dark areas around stars ten through twelve did not sell.

The **Superior** Long Beach sale contained a large number of desirable Seated coins but unfortunately, most did not sell.

An 1842-O half dime in original MS-65 but with a flat head and bow knot went for \$14,375. An 1844-O in MS-64 that was bright and well struck did not sell, nor did an absolutely beautiful well struck 1846 half dime in AU-55.

An 1845-O dime in XF-40 and original did not sell, nor did an AU-55 1846 dime that was sharp and attractive in spite of some marks. An 1859-S dime in AU-58 that was once in my collection and was nicely toned did not sell, nor did an evenly toned original 1860-O dime in AU-50. An 1871-CC dime in AU-50 with nice blue-gray toning and a few darker areas and decent strike did not sell.

An XF 45 1854 huge O quarter with even toning and rare in this grade did not sell, nor did a well struck 1856-S quarter in MS-61. An 1860-S quarter in VF-20 that was a generous grade but evenly worn did not sell, nor did an 1861-S quarter in XF-45 with album toning. An 1873 closed 3 quarter in MS-62 with light toning and subdued luster sold for \$29,900.

An 1872-CC half in MS-62 that was well struck and decent for the grade soared to an amazing \$100,625. Battle of the Registry Sets?

The **Heritage** Long Beach sale featured an 1844-O half dime with light toning in AU-50 for \$2,530 and an 1846 half dime in XF-45 with album toning at \$5,462.

A deep gray 1844 dime in XF-40 sold for \$863 and an 1859-S dime in AU-55 that was attractive and well struck despite some light marks went for \$6,900. A cleaned VF 1873-CC dime that had toned back and had

some marks hit \$4,313.

An 1852-O quarter in MS-62, with only one graded finer, sold for \$29,900 despite some reverse spots. An 1854-O huge O in F-12 did not sell but a F-15 duplicate went for \$2,645. An 1859-S half in XF-40 and formerly in my collection but now brightened sold for \$4,025 while a well struck 1860-S in VF 35 with nice toning soared to \$12,650. A nice XF-40 1861-S did not sell nor did an original 1864-S in F-12. Another 1864-S in MS-64 with some dark areas on both sides still realized \$41,688 while a similarly graded 1868-S quarter with some dark streaks on the reverse sold for \$15,525. An 1872-CC quarter in VF-30 with rim toning did not sell while an 1872-S in MS-66, formerly from the Norweb Collection, sold for \$86,250 despite a fingerprint in the left obverse field. An original 1873-CC in F-12 did not sell.

A bright 1844-O double date half in AU-55 realized \$6,613 but a bright 1852-O in AU-55 did not sell. An 1857-S in XF-45 and a decent coin went for \$1,150. An 1866-S no motto in XF-45 with original toning sold for \$2,760 while an MS-62 example of the same date that was well struck soared to \$14,950. An 1870-CC in AU-50 that was original with a few marks went for \$28,750 while the AU-50 1870-CC from my sale appeared once again and was graded AU 50 but had been brightened. This coin did not sell for the fifth time. A dipped out AU-55 1871-CC managed \$4,744. An original 1873-CC no arrows in VF-25 went for \$1,438 despite only L...TY being visible.

A decent 1872-CC Dollar in AU-53 sold for \$11,500 and an original gray 1878-CC Trade Dollar in XF-45 realized \$3,450.

The **Stack's** Autumn sale featured an 1873-CC arrows dime in F-12 but rough and scratched at \$2,875 while a VF-25 1885-S dime with similar problems realized \$633.

An 1854-O huge O in VG-10 with nice even wear sold for \$1,840.

A very nice 1874-CC half in AU-55 that was well struck soared to \$23,000.

An 1871-CC Dollar in XF-40 that was cleaned, granular, and ugly only realized \$4,600 whereas a VF-30 duplicate with a washed out look and some marks realized \$5,175. An 1872-CC Dollar in F-12 that was decent for the grade sold for \$2,645.

It remains to be seen what impact the current economic problems will have on the rare coin market and auctions.



Question of the Month

Topics for e-Discussion by Paul Kluth

Here is a multifaceted question this month. Tell us about your **ANA Baltimore experience!**

Whether you are a collector and/or dealer, what was your favorite acquisition in Baltimore? No need to share what you paid or where you got it because that's your trade secret of course. And if it be the case, it's okay to describe even a "non-Liberty Seated" purchase...well just this one time.

What was your favorite "Liberty Seated" collecting activity during the Convention besides attending the LSCC Annual Meeting? Also, what can be done to improve your Liberty Seated collecting enjoyment at future regional meetings/shows?

All responses are welcome! Please give us your thoughts and opinions. Send your reply to the *E-Gobrecht* editor at wb8cpy@arrl.net.

Nominations for 2009 Hall of Fame

After this year's memorable ceremony where John McCloskey and Kam Ahwash were the first to be inducted into the LSCC's Hall of Fame, the Hall of Fame committee is pleased to announce that it is accepting nominations for the Liberty Seated Collector Club's 2009 Hall of Fame. Eligible nominees include club members who have made significant contributions to expanding the literature on Seated coinage, who have built an important collection of Liberty Seated coinage, or who have served in a leadership position while contributing to the success of LSCC. Please send your nominations to the Hall of Fame Committee Chairman, Jim Gray, at jgray67@carolina.rr.com and include the nominee's name and a short narrative on why you feel this individual should receive this honor. Deadline for 2009 nominations is December 31, 2008.





Answers to Last Month's Question

Topics for e-Discussion by Paul Kluth

Should this Coin be Lightly Cleaned or Dipped?



Many thanks to everyone who responded this month! Discussion and interaction through *E-Gobrecht* is just another way that our hobby can be so enjoyable. Please send in your thoughts each month and we'll do our best to get some really interesting questions in front of you for this column.

The subject of cleaning coins is one of those age-old questions in numismatics that can be both challenging and controversial depending on your point of view, goals and personal experience. The ideas suggested above are all very informative and yet quite diverse.

Included are additional images of the 1847 L.S. Quarter with reverse double die showing the unattractive toning and highlights of the variety itself. A close-up image of the date area should assist in validating the positioning of the digits for this obverse die. Also shown is a close-up of the strongest doubling seen on the reverse at QUAR. ...Paul

From **Greg Johnson**: I haven't gotten all the way through the *E-Gobrecht* yet, but you got my attention immediately. The 1847 quarter pictured is actually a Briggs 2A and does have the repunched 47/47 even if you cannot see it. The date position for obverses 1 and 2 is different enough that

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one can tell easily even from pictures. As far as what to do with the coin. I personally would soak it in acetone and rinse thoroughly with water. That will get rid of many surface contaminants, but won't remove toning. That's as far as I would go. In fact, I own a coin that is an exact twin of the piece pictured and that's exactly what I did. With some of the "stuff" removed from the surface the repunching of the 7 is visible.

From **Dr. Eugene Bruder**: Upon viewing the coin, I would have it professionally conserved. That way, if it looks like nothing can be done to improve the coin, nothing will be done! Unless the person trying to conserve the coin has a lot of experience, it is all too likely that the coin will be ruined. Once a coin reaches this state, I feel that it is better to have it reviewed by professionals to see if it can be saved from further degradation.

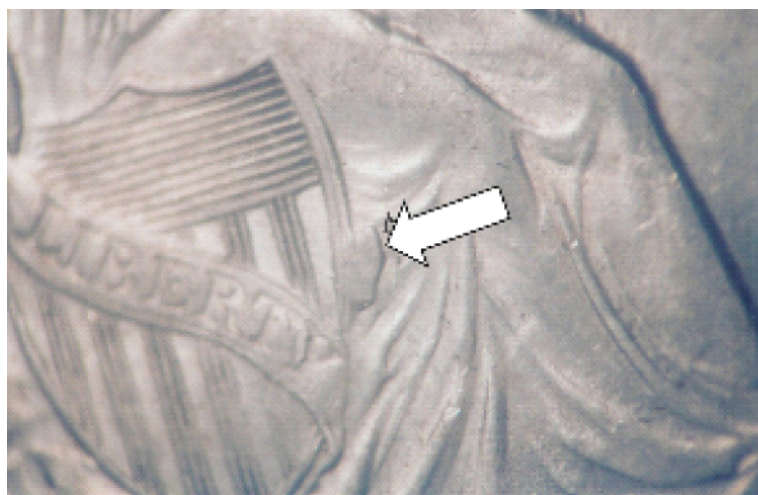
From **Errol Tamburinelli**: I would opt for conservation by NCS.

From **John Merz**: It's a beautiful coin as is. Don't even THINK of cleaning or dipping!

From **Sean Kuhn**: In regards to the 1847 quarter in the E-Gobrecht, my opinion is that it should be left alone! It has beautiful original toning, why would someone ever want to remove this toning to try and make it look shiny? If the current owner doesn't like that kind of color, they should find one that they do like, not alter one to their liking. I've always thought that we should pass our coins along in the same condition we received them.

From **Len Augsburg**: Personally, I would not dip it. I am a strong advocate for originality, and in fact have never dipped a Liberty Seated coin. Original, unmolested 19th century silver coinage should have a pleasing "antique" look to the surfaces - nowadays a very hard thing to find! I have dipped a few modern proof coins which had not been well cared for and had developed hazy or cloudy surfaces. These are now stored in non-PVC Mylar flips, which are good for long term storage. Most of my older coins are slabbed and stored in Intercept Shield boxes for maximum protection. These reside in a bank box along with a bag of silica gel to absorb any excess moisture.

From **Bill Bugert**: I prefer toned coins and would not fuss with it unless it had vinyl coin holder residue. In that case, I would gently remove the slime with acetone and a Q-tip.



1876-S Half Dollar with Internal Cud

Numismatist Bill Fivaz submitted this photograph of a high grade 1876-S half dollar shown at the right. There is a huge lump along the right edge of the shield in Liberty's gown. The reverse has of a micro S sized mintmark. Here's one to look for at the next coin show.

P.S. This die marriage is also plated in *The Complete Guide to Liberty Seated Half Dollars* as the VF30 "With-motto" grading plate coin.



Liberty Seated Coin T-shirt

Although I don't like to push products, I thought this one was worthwhile. It is a T-shirt with the design of a Liberty Seated Dollar. It is available with the obverse on the front only or with the reverse also on the back (how clever!). My sister surprised me

with this during my last visit with her. It is a high quality cotton T-shirt but can be also purchased as a baseball jersey or hooded sweatshirt. Prices vary with options but start at \$17.99. It is available at http://t-shirts.cafepress.com/coin_mens-clothing?page=2. It is not something I would wear to a coin show but it is great for showing off my hobby at home.

The Editor

From Len Augsburger:

The attached cartoon is from an 1870 edition of *Harper's Weekly*, complaining about the lack of hard coinage in circulation. The coinage depicted doesn't quite look like Liberty Seated material, though judging from the context it was certainly meant to. As for the lack of circulation, it seems that an issue such as an 1869 quarter was nearly as prized then as it is now!





Perseverance is *Key* for Researching 1840-O Dimes

by Gerry Fortin

It is no secret to fellow Seated Dime collectors that the 1840-O date is my favorite target for die variety research. The date presents multiple challenges with numerous die pairing, die states and difficulties in locating original pieces in AU or better condition. The www.seateddimevarieties.com web-book lists 16 entries after years of research. But I have always been troubled by the incompleteness of the F-101 listing. The F-101 listing is comprised of Obverse 1 and Reverse A (Large O) with both dies being in a late die state. On all examples of F-101 seen, Obverse A exhibits a weak date that is most likely a result of the obverse being lapped. Reverse A is starting to crack with multiple die cracks from the wreath through the legend then into the denticles. Kam Ahwash's listing and description of an F-101 variety (in his encyclopedia) with reverse die cracks is consistent with my observations but his plate coin appears to be that of an early die state with bold date and no reverse die cracks evident.

Opening the web-book 1840-O date chapter with a late die state listing as F-101 has always bothered me. Why could I not find an early die state example to properly list the late die state pairing as F-101a? Did an early die state example exist as per the Ahwash encyclopedia? To provide a perspective on how long I've been working to answer these questions, a short history of the current plate coin is in order. I seriously pursued collecting seated dimes around 1988 and started working with Brian Greer on the first LSCC sponsored Liberty Seated Dime population survey during 1989 and the subsequent publishing of the Gobrecht Journal article during March 1990. As a re-

sult of the project, Brian and I become friends and corresponded during his preparation of the "The Complete Guide to Liberty Seated Dimes" which was eventually published in 1992. After the guide book was published, Brian decided to sell his reference dime collection and fortunately I was able to buy a substantial number of pieces to improve my collection and aid with the variety research goal that was set. I bought several of Brian's 1840-O dimes including the Large O and Medium plate coins employed for the guide book. The Large O dime became my F-101 listing and is essentially the finest example seen save for an equivalent AU58 example in a Heritage auction during the past two years. After 1992, I started searching for an early die state example of Brian's Large O dime but the search proved to be fruitless until July 2008. After 16 years of checking all EF or better dimes to appear at auction or on dealer websites, an early die state F-101 example graded NGC AU58 dime appeared at Bowers and Merena's July 2008 Baltimore Sale. The dime and variety were easy to diagnose from B&M's website images. The Large O mintmark immediately drew my attention followed by seeing a bold obverse date. Was this the elusive early die state to the current F-101 listing or was the dime the F-102 Large O variety (Obverse 2 paired with Reverse B)? A quick check of my website, as I was in China, confirmed my suspicions; the B&M auction listing was an early die state F-101! Obviously, this 1840-O dime was purchased with a strong bid to ensure it found its way into my reference collection. I arrived home from China during the evening of September 27 and immediately opened the package from Bowers and

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Perseverance is Key for Researching 1840-O Dimes (Continued)

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Merena that waited. The confirmation was made with a 16x loupe; the search was over.

1840-O F-101 Variety (Early Die State) – NGC AU58 (Below)

Images from Bowers and Merena Website



1840-O F-101a Variety (Late Die State) – PCGS AU58 (Below)

Images by Gerry Fortin



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Perseverance is Key for Researching 1840-O Dimes (Continued)

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I though *E-Gobrecht* readers may enjoy a few macro comparison images to help discern early and late die states. First is the date punch comparison. Base and date punch depth erosion is obvious and does suggest the obverse die was lapped down. For the sake of simplicity, I've chosen to label the pre-lapping die state as F-101 and the post lapping die state as F-101a.

Early Die State (F-101)



Medium Level Date - DR -3R

Late Die State (F-101a)



Medium Level Date - DR -3B-2

Next are comparison images of the reverse dies in early and late dies states. Reverse A design element weakness is most evident during F-101a die state.

Early Die State (F-101)



Late Die State (F-101a)



The title of this article mentions perseverance as a key attribute of those individuals who perform long term die variety research. Perseverance is critical not only for building in depth die variety collections but also for building exemplary date and mintmark sets. Numismatics is not a race as the registry set phenomenon might lead you to believe; rather it is a long journey that can span several decades.

As always, Happy Hunting!



Subscriber Correspondence

From **Jim Koppel**: I'm having a HECK of a time counting mill-marks. I use a 10x loupe; but no matter what type of improvised devices I use to cover and/or click the marks, I always seem to lose count due to tiny slippages, etc. Any advice to me and others? (*Editor: I am very glad to see you are attempting to count reeds. Many people ignore the third die and it has a wealth of information.*)

By mill-marks, I am assuming you mean the edge reeds emplaced by the collar. If you have a stereo microscope, it is really quit simple. Randy Wiley and I have used this technique for over 2 decades and I have counted the reeds on over 1,300 seated half dollars. Here it is: Simply remove the reflector from an inexpensive flashlight, place the coin into the reflector under your stereo microscope, and slowly rotate the reflector with the coin while viewing the in-focus edge (i.e., reeds) through the scope. Start at an obvious flaw (all coins have them) and, count the reeds (out loud is best and ignore distractions) using the reticule of your scope to keep track of your position; stop for breathers at easily referenced places (e.g., nicks, lint, cracks in the collar, etc). Continue until you get to the starting reed. You may have to initially adjust the coin in the reflector to keep it in focus for the entire counting session. With practice, you can easily and accurately count the reeds on a coin in about 2-3 minutes. Be careful with the reflector surfaces; they scratch easily and you may end up replacing it more often than you like. One more thing, you can also photograph the edge of the coin with this technique.

If you don't have a stereomicroscope, another method I've used at coins shows is to have a magnifier on a stand (or have someone hold it) and slowly rotate the coin on edge with both hands. It is much more difficult, time consuming, and prone to errors (but it works also.)

From **Dick Osburn**: The Long Beach show was interesting. The economy was falling apart during the show, and many dealers reported poor results. That wasn't the case at our table. We had the biggest Long Beach show we've ever had. Not as big buying, since I had to keep my checkbook closed, but the sales total was the biggest ever for our company. It truly shows that the rare coins continue to be hot, in spite of bad economic news and other negative factors in the market. Many of our customers mentioned that they expected coins to do better and to be a better investment than the stock market. I completely agree.

The auctions also showed mixed results. Some of the rarities sold for spectacular numbers. A 1860-S quarter in VF-35 went for \$12,650 in the Heritage auction, and an 1872-CC half in MS62 went for over \$100k in the Superior sale. Numerous other rare dates went very strong. There was also evidence, however, of the uncertainty in the market. A number of coins went well below my expectations. There were bargains to be had if you did your homework and didn't chase the ones that took off. Time will tell whether this trend continues or whether the market just keeps on charging ahead

Wanted: Good stories or recollections Of John McCloskey

From **Len Augsburger**: We will be running a biography of John McCloskey in a future edition of the *Gobrecht Journal*. I am collecting related stories or recollections of the membership, please email any input to leonard_augsburger@hotmail.com.



Information Wanted

I'm currently working on the large task of cataloging the known seated half dime errors known to collectors by date/mintmark. If you own any seated half dime errors, please send me an e-mail at the address below and provide the following information to make this survey as accurate as possible:

- Date and Mintmark of coin
- Type of error
- Grade
- Certification service if graded
- Photographs of both sides of the coin (if possible)

Information about any known errors including blank planchets is welcomed. The results will be published in an article at the end of this year. Dennis Hengeveld, qeagle88@gmail.com

Notice: Availability of past issues of the E-Gobrecht

Through the generosity of Gerry Fortin, the previous issues of the *E-Gobrecht* are readily accessible on his seated dime web-site at <http://www.seateddimevarieties.com/LSCC.htm>

Advertisements

Rare Coins for Sale: Since 1979, David Lawrence Rare Coins has specialized in Seated and Barber coinage for collectors. Please visit our web site for 6,000+ offerings of U.S. & World coins, currency, and stamps for sale and auction. We are also interested in buying or selling your coins at auction. <http://www.davidlawrence.com> or phone 1-800-776-0560, members: PNG, ANA (life), FUN, CSNS

Liberty Seated Quarter Cuds & Rotated Dies

Wanted: Other U.S. series of interest as well. Please reply directly to Paul Kluth @ pcmdmp@msn.com or to the e-mail address of the *E-Gobrecht* newsletter.

Rotated Reverse Seated Dimes Wanted: I am

looking for rotated reverse Liberty Seated dimes. Any interested parties can email Jason Feldman at jason@seated.org

Wanted to Buy: Nice, problem-free bust and seated material. We specialize in affordable collector coins. Puro's Coins and Jewelry, web: www.vtcoins.com, email: puro@vtcoins.com, phone: 1-800-655-1327.

Seated Dime Die Varieties Wanted: I am paying high prices for Seated Dimes with major cuds, die cracks, and rotated reverses. Contact David Thomas at davethomas333@hotmail.com or 1-949-929-2830.



Liberty Seated Collectors Club

Contact Information:

**President and
Editor, *Gobrecht Journal***

John McCloskey
John.McCloskey@notes.udayton.edu

**Vice President and
Editor, *E-Gobrecht***

Bill Bugert
(717) 337-0229
P.O. Box 3761
Gettysburg, PA 17325
wb8cpy@arrl.net

Secretary / Treasurer

Leonard Augsburger
(847) 816-1649
P.O. Box 6114
Vernon Hills, IL 60061
leonard_augsburger@hotmail.com

LSCC website:

<http://www.lscweb.org>

Mark your calendar !

2008

- 35th Anniversary of the LSCC - 2008
- Deadline for articles for *Gobrecht Journal* issue #103 - October 3, 2008
- Deadline for advertisements for *Gobrecht Journal* issue #103 - October 10, 2008
- LSCC voting for the 2008 Kamal M. Ahwash award - ballots due October 30, 2008
- LSCC voting for the *Gobrecht Journal* Literary Award (Issues 76-100) - ballots due October 30, 2008
- Deadline for yearly dues payment - October 30, 2008
- LSCC Regional meeting - November 21, 2008, Friday, 9 AM, Baltimore Convention Center, room TBA but probably room 301.

LSCC Pledge

To encourage, promote, and dispense numismatic knowledge of the Liberty Seated coins; to cultivate fraternal relations among its members and all those interested in the science of numismatics.

LSCC Membership Information. Dues are \$20 per year and include three issues of the *Gobrecht Journal*, an award winning numismatic publication. To join the Liberty Seated Collectors Club, for *Gobrecht Journal* mailing address changes, or for other membership questions, correspond with the LSCC Secretary.

Articles, comments, or advertisements for publication in the *Gobrecht Journal* may be addressed to the LSCC President.

Information, input, comments, or suggestions for improvements to this *E-Gobrecht* are actively solicited from anyone and may be sent to the Editor, *E-Gobrecht*.

To be added or removed from the *E-Gobrecht* mailing list, send an email message with the words "Subscribe/Unsubscribe" in the subject line of the message to: wb8cpy@arrl.net.

Wanted: Material for this newsletter!

Please consider submitting something for print. It need not be elaborate; it can be something as simple as a short note on your favorite variety, neat find, nice cherry pick, happenings at a coin show, rare Liberty Seated coinage coming up for auction, etc. If you are interested in it, rest assured, others will be too! Sharing information is a goal of this newsletter and you need not be an experienced or famous writer to submit something. This is a continuing plea.

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